

NEW JERSEY RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION
PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MARCH 10, 2021

Present: Bill Foelsch, Kat Avitt, Dina Trunzo, Mona Cholowinski, Jen Underwood, Ryan Horne, Katie Frey, Rick Wright, Tim Hill, Pam Griffin, Ben Stentz, Romaine Eaker Kelly, Pat Swartz, Mary Beth Wheeler, Don Bogardus, Dawn Thompson, Carl Jennings, Jen Gander, Dave Horsnall.

Bill Review:

S2921 – Allows municipalities to designate outdoor areas upon which people may consume alcoholic beverages. This provides for towns to determine locations and could affect parks. The governor's previous executive order provided for restaurants to be able to use parks. **Monitor**

S2796/A4422 as amended – Establishes the "Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Long Term Planning Commission" in the Department of Human Services. Amendments were primarily language based, however the member list was reduced considerably. Political party allocations to the Commission were also removed. Pam asked if we could review the list of members for input. Rick will try to arrange a call with the sponsor. **Support**

A2070/S1016 as amended – Restricts use of neonicotinoid pesticides. Reduces the distance from a building from 7 feet to one foot. Removes liability from media outlets for promotion of products containing neonicotinoids. **Monitor**

A1285/S2874 as amended – Establishes procedures for awarding of design-build contracts. The bill has passed the Assembly and is in the second reading in the Senate. Contracts of \$5 million or more must include union/apprentice work force. A cost savings in the process might be realized but the requirement for apprentices would likely raise the cost of the contract. **Monitor**

S3367/A5250 - Establishes the Commission on People with Disabilities. "In but not of" the Department of Human Services. The 25-member panel would research and recommend policies and procedures to assist people with disabilities, work with State agencies for hiring and programs, and serve as a point of contact with the Governor's Office. Rick noted that the Dept. of Education and Dept. of Labor will also be involved. **Support**

S3379 – Steven's Law, would prohibit use of non-wood bats in certain organized games. Games include those run by or affiliated with recreation departments, nonprofit organizations, and public and private schools. **Oppose**

S3414/A5378 – Promotes workforce diversity in public works projects. The bill has passed the Senate. It requires project labor agreements that the agreement by a government subdivision would promote the employment of residents of the governing unit. The agreement would apply to work done on the public works site only. **Monitor**

S3436/A5338 – Requires certain transportation research to consider needs of individuals with physical, sensory, intellectual, and developmental disabilities. Creates a research center in the Department of Transportation. **Support** (*was there an amendment request here?*)

S3442/A5334 – Requires DOT and NJT to study and implement transportation mobility and accessibility improvements for persons with autism and developmental disabilities. **Support**

S3480/A5418 – concerns the definition of veteran for Civil Service hiring preferences. Deletes the use of “war” and replaces it with “active duty”. Uses dates instead of days, deletes “actively engaged”, and, upon approval, would require a State amendment. **Monitor**

S3476/A5110 – Requires Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to establish the Veterans Outdoor Recovery Task Force. The task force would coordinate with agencies to recommend actions to improve, expand, and facilitate outdoor therapy and treatment, and provide a report 18 months after the initial meeting. **Support Active.**

S3484/A5434 – Increases use of Solar Energy generation on lands eligible for farmland preservation, creates BPU incentives on dual-use projects on unpreserved farmland, revises law concerning solar generation on preserved farmlands. Dual use requires that farming continue under the solar panels. The generation equipment must not exceed a 1 to 5 ratio to the farming acreage. **Monitor**

S3511/A3227 – Revises requirements for signage indicating accessible facilities for people with disabilities. Incorporates a new symbol, replaces “handicapped” with accessible, applies only to new signs, placards, banners, license plates, etc. Does not require replacement. **Support**

A5409 – Directs the DEP to establish a grant program for local governments to support development of community gardens. Requires a nonprofit partner to develop and maintain the garden. Several members will seek to meet with the sponsor to determine the intent of the bill and if adjustments could be made to the role of the nonprofit under certain circumstances. There are currently community service block grants available to certain nonprofits. **Support**

AR227 – Urges the DEP to develop and adopt rules and regulations to implement “Prescribed Burn Act”. The Act was passed in 2018 and no rules have yet been proposed. **Monitor**

AR230/SR115 – Urges the Governor and Legislature to establish programs to eliminate food deserts. Provide incentives to grocery stores in select areas. **Support**

AJR211 – Urges Congress to pass the National Apprenticeship Act of 2021. The Act would provide \$3.5 billion. **Monitor**

A4383,4844, 4845 – Forest Management Plans – NJRPA testified in committee. Our concern is the lack of funding to support the work. The plan would apply to areas of 25 acres or more and require the full ecology of the property, not just trees. A registered consultant must provide the plan. There are 52 registered consultants in the State for the hundreds of possible locations. It is a contentious bill – some

members of the natural resources' community feel the plans would open areas up to logging. The next step is a conference call with the sponsor. The bill will be re-worked before advancing. Assemblyman Houghtaling is primarily concerned with the Pinelands. The hope is that a timeline and funding will be added. Bill stated it may be possible to use funds from the Open Space Trust funds or Green Acres Stewardship grants. **Continue to Oppose**

Recreation Certification Workgroup –

Through the assistance of Plainsboro Township Mayor Peter Cantu the Workgroup is seeking meeting with Assemblywoman Linda R. Greenstein (District 14) for potential sponsorship of new legislation that would reinstate the Recreation Administrator and Recreation Supervisor Certification program within the Department of Community Affairs.

NEXT MEETING – May 12, 2021 VIA ZOOM